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The Church Triumphant

BY THE
REV. LUCIEN ADELBERT DAVISON
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To MY SAINTLY MOTHER, whose love for Christ Jesus, and whose influence and teaching were responsible, through the grace of God, for my first and deepest love and knowledge of the Bible, and my faith in its veracity and reverence for its teaching; who taught me to read it, even from my early infancy, guided me in its precepts, instructed me in its wisdom, explained its theology, inculcated a love for its contents, showed me how to study it, and led me to perceive something of its manifold revelation; to her, the most devoted of all earthly friends, who in the Paradise of the blessed now awaits the coming of the Lord for His saints to reign with Him in glory, I humbly and most lovingly dedicate this volume, with the fervent hope and prayer that God may use it, if only a little, in the gathering of the elect, and the hastening of the kingdom and the presence of Christ in glory.

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PREFACE

I BELIEVE that it is almost impossible for one earnestly to study Holy Scripture with the sincere desire to know what the writers meant, and what the records convey, without being convinced that they are truly inspired. And by inspired I mean that, no matter who may have written various portions of which they consist, or from what source they may have obtained their material directly, or what mental or physical processes may explain their work, nevertheless, back of it all was *one* Mind directing it, and that a divine, an omniscient intelligence. In other words, the real author of the Bible is God, working through the Holy Spirit. This means, then, that the Scripture is a unit; that it is more than a collection of books; it is really and truly a single, although a very complex, Book.

But it means more than this. If God's mind and power were thus in control, it is a perfectly reliable work (I am speaking of the original, of course), for God cannot err. Therefore not only every statement, but every word, was subject to that superintendence. A human editor may admit faulty material, implications which he might not approve, or an inadequate or misleading use of words. But the divine, working in perfection, can make no such blunders. An earthly author might over-

look the mistakes of his stenographer; the Holy Spirit knew and approved, not only every sentence, but every word.

To have inspired a thought without directing its accurate expression, would have been no inspiration at all, so far as the reader is concerned. If God meant one thing, and the recorder wrote another, how can we know anything about it? On the other hand, the writer *may* have meant quite another thing from that which the Holy Spirit guided him to write. The unwitting prophecy of the high priest, when he said, "It is better that one man die than that the whole nation perish," exactly illustrates my meaning. Thus inspiration did not exclude the personality of the writer, nor the bias of the times, but rather it made use of both of these.

If the Bible be thus inspired, the Holy Spirit having been the controlling agent in the selection of ideas and the use of material, and the final authority in the choice of words, figures, phrases, and forms used, then a most rigid scrutiny of the (original) text in its symbolism, its construction, and its verbal elements, will surely repay richly for all the labor.

When a boy, I was taught that scarcely two English words were absolutely synonymous, that is, identical in use and meaning, and I assume that this is true also of both Greek and Hebrew. Unquestionably, if the Holy Spirit really inspired, He would see to it that exactly the right word was actually inscribed by the writer, consciously or unconsciously adopting that which was necessary to the purpose of God.

Various forms, then, of the divine Name have a deeper significance than merely to show diversity of authorship. The terms "Son of Man," and "Son of God," are not interchangeable. Even the order—as for example, Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus—is not without some significance, if we can only find it. If I mistake not, the Hebrew of the Old Testament always put it "gold and silver," whereas in the Greek of the New Testament the order is invariably "silver and gold." Does this signify nothing to a logical mind, believing in a divine revelation through a Living Word?

There is reason, then, to "search the Scriptures," if we would get at their full import. Not only are ideas accurately expressed, words being used with absolute precision, but the literary form itself is significant, while symbolic teaching is to be found where we least expect it. Our Lord taught in parables that the truth might be hidden from those unprepared, while yet revealed to those who were ready for it. And this parabolic instruction is ever present in the Bible. Such were almost all the prophetic utterances, and the pages of Holy Writ are still filled with prophecy which we do not yet grasp. Is it unreasonable to continue searching for revelation when the seer Amos said, "Surely, the Lord Jehovah will do nothing except He reveal His secret unto His servants, the prophets"?

Without doubt recorded events, specific teaching, and prophetic sayings, have more than a single application. I see no reason why the Revelation of St. John, for instance, should not outline the conflicts of Christian national history (according to some interpretations), at the

same time that it discloses the final conflict which is to take place before Christ's kingdom is made stable in the world, as others claim it does. Surely, prophecy has more than one legitimate interpretation. And as the little cosmos mirrors the great cosmos, and man is made in the image of God, so the events of this material sphere must reflect something of the truth of spiritual realms. Our preconceived ideas of what ought to be found in the Bible are, in large measure, responsible for our failure to read what is there revealed.

It is because the Bible is the Word of God, not made flesh, but yet living, inspired, true, and absolutely reliable, that I think these few pages following may be useful to some who love Him. But those who will not admit my fundamental presupposition—namely, that the Holy Scripture is the real work of the Holy Spirit—need not expect to be convinced of it by these chapters, if they are not willing to take the time and trouble to follow out, in some detail, the accuracy of application which I have tried but briefly to indicate. Neither can a man read a book while a taxicab hurries him from one appointment to the next, and expect to be won to the main thesis, the evidence for which is so largely cumulative. Nevertheless, those who deny my presuppositions, and also the truth of my main thesis, who view the Bible as a work subject to the limitations of human imperfection, and can see in certain portions no ulterior meaning, ought to find a certain literary interest in tracing a symbolism which runs accurately parallel to historical fact.

Still, my direct object was not an argument for any particular theory of the inspiration of Holy Scripture,

but, rather, for a better comprehension of what Jesus taught concerning His Church. I am sure that the more we understand its nature, its present mission, and its ultimate purpose, the more effective work we will be able to do as a Church. But, more than this, such a knowledge will give that hope and inspiration and incentive for overcoming, which the Apostles so earnestly sought to instil, and of which we are so much in need. When a man comes to realize that there is something besides golden harps and crowns, and eternal idleness with constant singing, invariably his devotion and love and sanctification are deepened. Harps and crowns and song are but symbolic of things infinitely more worth while, though numbers of people seem to think they have no ulterior meaning.

I have been careful to use no biblical quotations except in the sense in which I am convinced the context meant them to be taken, nor in a sense which conflicts with any other statement, so far as diligent search has disclosed to me. If any reader be not convinced by my exposition after careful consideration, provided he will examine the scriptural passages referred to, I feel sure that he will become convinced.

And with the prayer that God will use this effort to advance the interests in His Kingdom, and to bring some to a better realization of the hope that is awaiting His saints, I offer this, the result of years of study, to any who will take the trouble to examine it.

Lucien Adelbert Davison.

St. James' Rectory, Theresa, N. Y.
Feast of St. Michael and All Angels,
September 29, 1911.

I
The Creation

I.

I.—THE CREATION.

THERE are certain perfectly obvious parallels between the account of the Creation as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, and the history of the Christian religion, taken in its broadest outline in the same manner as the creation of the material world is there sketched. This is quite true, regardless of any theories, or "isms," or religious teachings. And, though these facts lead, as I believe, to certain definite conclusions, which prejudiced minds may refuse to admit, yet the parallelisms themselves exist with a clearness beyond the possibility of dispute, even though it be denied that any relation exists between the two sets of facts,

or that their relation has any significance.

In the history of the Christian religion we find, thus far, six more or less distinct epochs, or eras: (1) from the time of Adam, or the early history of man, to the translation of Enoch, or to the flood; (2) thence on to the call of Abraham; (3) from this date to the dedication of the Temple; (4) from that time to the Resurrection or the Ascension of our Lord; (5) from the founding of the Church to the time of the Crusades; (6) the centuries which have followed. These eras, it will be seen, are approximately one thousand years in length.

Still this division into eras is not essential to my present purpose, and, in order to avoid its discussion now, I shall not insist upon it, but suggest it only. Instead, I shall arbitrarily divide the time into periods of a thousand years each, using the date of Christ's Ascension as the point of reckoning both forwards and backwards. We shall thus shun, as it will be seen, any controversy, not only of the division into epochs but also as to accurate chronology. And

for the same reason we can, for the time being, leave both the first and the last, or sixth, periods indefinite as to duration, the latter reaching into the future, the former extending into the past quite as far as any historian, theologian, or scientist may desire. These arbitrarily divided periods, which will suit my purpose quite as well, and limits the discussion to the main issue, I may call great days.

Early in the account of the Creation we read: "God said, let there be light, and there was light . . . and God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So it was evening—and it was morning." This is said to be the first day, or rather one day.

Throughout the Bible light is used to symbolize the revelation and knowledge of God, which brings life. It is so used in the Psalms and by the Prophets; God's Word is said to produce light; Christ, who revealed God, is the light of the world; His disciples are the children of light; miraculous light accompanied the announcement of the advent of Jesus and His transfigura-

tion, both specific revelations of God; light describes the glory of God, which is a "manifestation of the divine nature"; light blinded Saul of Tarsus when Jesus the Christ was revealed to him; God is light.

"Light is a type of God's favor," only in a secondary sense, His self-revelation being a matter of favor. Many passages show that the term is not used as significant of favor but, rather, as implying knowledge: "Ye are the light of the world," "let your light so shine," "if the light that is in thee be darkness," "every one that doeth evil hateth the light," "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." In short, light is consistently used by all the scriptural writers to symbolize knowledge of God, and this is the only significance which it uniformly has wherever used.

Now as light was called forth on the first day, so on the first great day of a thousand years light, or a knowledge of God, came to the world. Taking the story of the first chapters of Genesis, either as historical fact, or as an allegory, this statement remains

true. To Adam and to his race, to Cain, and to Enoch, who walked with God and pleased Him—whether these be historical men, or merely types of groups, or of kinds of people—to these God first made known His existence. And in either case the date can hardly be placed further back than 4,000, nor later than 3,000 years before Christ. Genesis puts the date of these facts within this millenium, and historical evidence points to the same time for the rise and development of the primeval religions, especially that of the Egyptian divinities which, curiously enough, are preëminently gods of light, and which are generally supposed to belong to the earliest of religious systems.

It was a dim, veiled light, to be sure—this light of the knowledge of God—not at all like the light of the sun itself. Yet it divided the day from night. And in this respect it must have been similar to the vapor-obscured light of the early world.

"So it was evening and it was morning—one day." This was the order of the an-

cient world, the day beginning and ending at sunset. This, too, was the order of the natural world, darkness before light. And this, also, has been the history of the first, and of all the great days of the spiritual, or religious world, so far as this earth is concerned. It has been a period of darkness followed by a time of enlightenment.

On the second day the waters were divided. Notice that this is in the plural; it is waters, not water. St. John tells us, in the seventeenth chapter of his Revelation, that the waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. In the eighth chapter of Isaiah we have the same use of the term "waters" for a nation. In the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel this term is also used for the peoples who increasingly accept Christ's salvation, and even in Isaiah, the fifty-fifth chapter, the word is thus figuratively used, if we understand the passage to refer prophetically to the coming of Israel to Christ through the influence of the Gentiles, or the Church. Even the literal "waters" of Genesis, the sixth chapter,

suggest the hordes of the king Apollyon, the destroyer spoken of in the ninth chapter of Revelation. At any rate, it seems evident that these "waters" were separated on the second great day, first, when from the sons of Noah sprang the three main races of the earth, and, secondly, when the confusion of tongues established the division of peoples. So it is at least according to biblical chronology, and this is the only consistent method in the figurative interpretation of any work—that is, to confine criticism to the figure employed, not criticizing a substituted, or a modified, symbol.

And I believe that historians also place the rise of nations, as such, in this same era, or period. Perhaps a further or a more accurate interpretation would be that which makes this division of waters from waters refer to "the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah," a time when an "expanse" effected a division of peoples under and beyond the firmament of a different dispensation.

As the third day of creation witnessed

the separation of earth-water and dry-ground, so the third great day testified to the rise and separation of the dry-ground of the Israelitish nation (at the Exodus) from the waters of the Gentile races, a separation of which it is elsewhere said of the latter, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." And unto this day the encroachments of the Gentile races have never been able to destroy the nationality of the Jews.

On this same day the ground began to bring forth herb and tree yielding food for both man and beast; and, on this same far-reaching day, the Israelitish nation began to produce that spiritual food to which Jesus alluded, at least in part, when He said, "it is written thou shalt live . . . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Between the Exodus and the dedication of the Temple the Hebrew race gave to the world sufficient "vegetation-fruit," "whose seed is in itself," to supply the world of that time with life-giving food. I refer, of course, to the entire work of God the Holy Spirit through the Hebrew nation.

That its "seed was in itself" is seen from the results, not only of law and prophets and their work, but also of the Church, and of their body of sacred literature, the Old Testament.

God's work of the fourth day was, not to create light, but to embody it in the form of the sun, moon, and stars. Likewise, He embodied the Word in the SUN, which is Jesus, God's most complete revelation of Himself to the world. This Sun of Righteousness declared Himself to be the light of the world while He was in the world, but He also said to the apostles, "ye are the light of the world." And as the moon receives and reflects the light from the sun, so the Church receives and sends forth the light which Jesus Christ came to shed abroad in the world. This Church came into corporate existence when Christ breathed upon the Apostles, commanding, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, which was just before He left the earth.

The fourth day ended with the setting of the sun, a day which might be likened

to one in the cold, polar region, where that brilliant orb of light is visible but a short time. And just at that sunset appeared the new moon, beautiful though faint, a moon which has since waxed and waned, sometimes shining full, clear, and brilliant as she turned her face towards that great light; at others with faint or hidden rays, though never quite failing in her mission to illuminate and to rule the darkness of the night, from which the direct rays of the Christ-light, that ruler of the day, are for a time withdrawn.

On this same great day God made, also, those who shine as the stars, the prophets and the Apostles, those who have been the means of bringing many to righteousness. Except for the Morning Stars (the Apostles), which sang the good news together, most of them shone in the evening, those centuries which preceded the last centuries of this thousand-year day. "So it was evening—and it was morning, a fourth day."

On the fifth day God disregarded the

ground, creating nothing upon it. But He commanded the waters to bring forth, and the fowl to multiply. Now for a thousand years after the establishment of the Church the symbol for a Christian was a fish. On this great day, for the first time, life eternal was offered to the Gentile nations, they having before this no part in the hope and citizenship of Israel. And, as a matter of historical fact, during this period the waters of the Gentiles brought forth abundantly of living fish.

While I find nothing which gives a clew to any symbolic use of the figure, "fowls of the air," except its own suggestion of resurrected souls, "which may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven," still we know that, while Israel, the ground, during these years brought forth no other kind of living creature, yet at Christ's death "many bodies of the saints arose, and came out of the grave after His resurrection"—saints who must have been of the Israelites. And we know, too, that when Christ ascended into heaven He led a multitude of

captives (see Eph. 4) who were probably these same Old Testament saints. But, after all, I am not sure that fowls belong to the ground, though for a time they rest upon it. Perhaps these fowls of the air refer to the saints in Paradise, awaiting the resurrection, or, perchance, to some other fact of the spiritual world.

On the sixth day the earth brought forth living creatures, "tame beast, and creeping thing and wild beast"; and God created man in His own image; also a woman—Adam and Eve—to have dominion over the fish, the birds, the tame beasts, and "over every thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Now for each of the creations of the five days we have found corresponding facts in the history of the religion of the one, true God. What facts, then, can we find which bear similar relation to the work of the sixth day?

In the Revelation of St. John the Divine we read of a beast, to rise out of the sea, of another coming up out of the earth, and of a great red, creeping thing, a dragon. Also,

in the twelfth chapter of the same book we read of a great wonder, or sign, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; . . . and she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

These are evidently things of which the living creatures of the account in Genesis are, or may be, types. The dragon, we are told, is the devil cast to the earth; the beasts seem to be ruling powers—governments perhaps, principalities, kingdoms, rulers of some sort, as Daniel's prophecy suggests; perhaps, also, the religious systems of the anti-christ.

But what is the man-child, of which Adam is the type? Or what fact in the spiritual or religious realm corresponds to the man (together with his helpmeet) which God created on that sixth day?

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul says that Adam is a figure of Him that is to come: a type of the com-

ing, or the destined One—who all along was to come. This, I suppose, is commonly understood to mean Jesus. But Adam was not a type of Jesus, the man, in the sense of exemplifying His essential characteristics. Adam was tempted, and sinned; Jesus, though tempted, sinned not. Adam was justly condemned; our Lord was unjustly put to death. The former was disobedient; Jesus was obedient unto death. The first man was naked; the Saviour was clothed with righteousness. Adam was driven and kept out of Paradise; Jesus willingly left and returned to Paradise. One was made a living soul; the other a quickening spirit. The first *became* as one of the gods (See Genesis 3:32); the second was God *from the beginning*. Adam was created in the image of God; Jesus, uncreated, was begotten in the form of man. Adam brought a curse upon the earth, death to mankind, and separated men from God; Jesus brought a blessing to all the earth, life to all who would receive it, and reconciled and reunited man to God. Thus in all essential characteris-

tics the one is directly opposed to the other. Adam can be a type, or figure, of the Lord our Saviour only in the sense of a contrast, or reverse type.

Now in his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul declares that the Israelites only had had hope in God, and he shows how necessary it was that the Gentiles should be admitted to the citizenship of Israel, in order that—as he explains—out of the two nations God might form ONE NEW MAN (Eph. 2:15). This man is new in species and character; it is novel, strange. (See the Greek καινὸν.) This one new man, as he further points out here and elsewhere, is the body of the Christ, a perfect man, a man of full growth. (See Eph. 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . unto a perfect man," not unto perfect men.) This is the Church with the Saviour its Head.

It is important to bear in mind the organic unity of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is not an organization in the sense of a confederation or an association. It is a true entity, an integer. At the time

St. Paul wrote it was complete, but not completed; it had all its parts and organs, but not in a perfected condition; it was in an undeveloped state. So close is the organic unity of its parts that St. Paul compares it to a human body, with its members and organs, with its joints and bands, with its life-giving Head, and its Holy Spirit. And, as the human body is composed of living cells, so the Church is made up of redeemed individuals, growing into "an holy temple in the Lord . . . an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Moreover, this Body, of which Jesus is the Head, is one with Christ, not only organically, but in mission and in office. We, as individual members of His Church, are to partake of His sufferings, His humility, His death. We are to join with Christ in the salvation of the world; for St. Peter tells us, the end of our faith is the salvation of souls (not of *your* souls, I. Peter 1:9). We share His priesthood; we are to reign with Him as king, a fact which explains why St. John saw the Lamb in the midst of the

throne, and also why the Faithful and True that sat on the white horse had many crowns upon His head (Rev. 19:32). Like unto Him we are to be made perfect, and set before God without spot, or blemish of any sort.

Much of prophecy concerning Christ and concerning the Church is identical, it seems to me. And the same descriptive terms are applied to each. For instance, Jesus is the Anointed One, and God hath anointed the Church. (See II. Cor. 1:21, St. Paul is writing to the Church of God, which is the antecedent of the pronoun "us.") He is the first-born of all creation, and of the dead, and we are a Church of first-born ones; Christ is the first-fruits, and we are a kind of first-fruits; both are the light of the world, both are Holy, both are invincible.

This the Body, with Christ the Head, is the Anointed One. For the intimate relation of the anointing of the Head and of the Body, consider the hundred and thirty-third psalm, where the anointing of the head

overflowed to the feet; so the anointing of the Church is from God, through Christ. And both Christ and the Church are anointed for sacrifice, for priesthood, and for kingship.

However, it must not for a moment be forgotten that Jesus, the Saviour, is all in all, through Christ who is to fill all things; and therefore not unto us but unto Him is due all the honor, all the glory, and all the praise for ever and ever!

This is the One New Man, the body of which is selected out of the two nations, as St. Paul said. This is the last Adam, mentioned in the Epistle to the Corinthians (I. Cor. 15:45, where St. Paul is speaking, not of Jesus Christ, but of the physical and of the glorified bodies), made a quickening, life-giving spirit through Christ, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For "the body is of Christ."

This is the one that was to come—the Destined One—quite as truly as Jesus the Saviour is the Destined One. The Body of Christ is the Destined One, first, in the sense

of having been predestined from the beginning: "Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in Thy book were all my members written; which day by day were fashioned when as yet there was none of them," is just as true concerning the Body of Christ as it is of the body of a man. God "hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25). And the Body of Christ is the Destined One, also, in the sense of being one with Christ, partaking of His nature, His life, His kingship, and His glory. This is in part "the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations."

This is eminently "He that was to come"; Jesus, glorified with His Body, the Church. Nor, as I have said, does the fact detract one whit from His glory. In Him we were taken as an inheritance, that we should be for the praise of His glory, says St. Paul (Eph. 1:11, 12). In fact, as life

in the human body resides, not primarily in the heart or lungs, but in the head, and through the nervous system pervades every portion of the body, so the Church is to be filled with all the fulness of God. And because, penetrated by His life, and living only in Him, the Church is the fulness of Christ, the full manifestation of His being, as St. Paul asserts (Eph. 1:23), just as Christ Himself is the true fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9, 10).

Thus are reconciled the facts that we individuals are the sons of God, and that Jesus is the only Son of God.

And now consider how completely Adam is a type of this Destined One, composed, as it is, of the redeemed in Christ. Like Adam, we as individuals have been tempted, disobedient, alienated from God, naked and not ashamed. As man comes to a real knowledge of good and evil, he dies to the world and, like Adam, he is not deceived but chooses death. As a follower of Jesus, he is condemned by the world. The Body, made of the lifeless dust of the ground, be-

comes a living soul through the inspiration and the indwelling of the life of God. It will be made in the image of God when our humble bodies are transformed into conformity with His glorified body, we being moulded afresh after the image of Him that hath created us. It will become as one of the Gods when, together with Him, our life is made manifest in glory, and we come into our inheritance. For the sake of the Church, Israel (the ground) was cursed, even as God had cursed the ground for the good (not the punishment) of Adam. The mission of this New Man is to keep and to dress the garden, to rule all the beasts of the field, and I believe that in a real sense he will leave the garden to till the *ground* from whence he came.

Does this seem a confused metaphor? I think the details will be found to be very accurate. The "head" of the man did not sin. It was not his intellect which was at fault. He was not deceived. It was the heart (the desires) and the will, whose impulse is found in the desires, which was re-

sponsible for the transgression. And so Job speaks of Adam as hiding his iniquity in his bosom (Job 31:33). On the other hand, it is the head which rules; within the head is the true seat of life; through the head enters the breath of life; and in the bloody sweat of the face is the body provided with the nourishment of the bread of life, all of which is true of the Head of the Church. Likewise other details may be referred to the members of that Body, as already indicated; only the members have been disobedient and sinful, while in the main the figure refers to the entire Body inhabited by the living God.

This, the fulness of Christ, is the Man made to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth . . . created . . . in the image of God," blessed of God, and commanded to fill and replenish the earth.

II.—THE INSPIRATION.

Now God created Adam on the sixth day. We are not told how long the process of

making was, but, evidently, the final act of the creation was the inspiration of the breath of life, and this was on the sixth day. What fact, then, in the formation of this One New Man corresponds to this inspiration? And shall we find it occurring on the sixth great day?

Jesus was born on the fourth great day. The Church began to be formed on the fifth, and has continued on, perhaps into the sixth great day. But it is still incomplete, or in process of development. Is the One New Man yet created?

The mystical body of Christ "is the blessed company of all the faithful people." It includes, as commonly admitted, all people baptized in the name of the Trinity. However, for the purpose of this discussion, we have no need to limit or further define its membership; it includes all those who are heirs of that everlasting kingdom, through the merits of the most precious death and passion of the Saviour; or, it embraces all those who do finally attain to that eternal glory. Moreover, we pray our Lord

"shortly to accomplish the number" of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom.

I wish this point, then, to stand out with perfect clearness: namely, that, somewhere in the course of time, the last member or members will be added to the Body of Christ; that the process of selection will not be extended indefinitely; that it will become final, completed; and that afterward will be the perfected kingdom. And our present interest in this matter is in finding the time of this accomplishment—not the absolute, but the relative time.

But the Church, we contend, consists also of an authorized ministry, with a system of divinely appointed Sacraments, and a Faith once delivered to the saints to be kept and preached.

We see, therefore, that this inspiration of the One New Man is not absolutely simple, or confined to a particular specific time; we see that it has a triple aspect. First, we have the central divine truth of the incarnation of the life of a personal God in the Son of Man, Jesus. This truth flows into the

whole system of spiritual powers and instruments which constitute and perpetuate the kingdom of God on this earth, and in this age. It gives vitality to the Gospel, actuality to the Sacraments of grace and power, visibility and unity to the Church Militant, authority to its teachings, and power to its ministry.

Secondly, this truth of the Incarnation offers inward gifts to every Christian by personal and organic union with our Lord. This comprehends the whole doctrine of regeneration and personal sanctification.

In the third place, there is the transfiguration of the Church which is to come. Jesus and His Apostles taught the doctrine of the final resurrection and glorification of the saints, when the Saviour "will transform our humbled body into conformity with His glorified body." At that time, "Christ, who is our life, shall appear; then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," as St. Paul said. This will be the supreme inspiration of life.

Our Lord breathed upon the Apostles,

commanding, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and the Church came into corporate existence; but *not until Pentecost* was it endowed with power or life. As one by one those who are being saved are added to the Church, being regenerate, born anew, the life of Christ animates each component individual cell of the mystical Body. But when the "trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," then, we having "all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," it may be said that, in the highest sense, the spirit of the living God has been breathed into this new creation.

These three facts are somewhat parallel to those of the formation of the human body, the endowment of life, or soul, and the quickening of it with the spirit of the first Adam. But note the vital point to our inquiry, namely: that the incarnation will be complete when, at the first resurrection, Christ

shall gather together in One the blessed company of the faithful, each clothed in his resurrected, glorified body. This is the final moment in the process of breathing into the Body the breath of life. This is the true time of the creation, for not until then will the incarnation be complete, or completed. Though this One New Man began to be formed out of the dust at the beginning of the fifth great day, yet the process was not completed on that day; it has been carried on into the sixth day. The transfiguration of the Church will end the process, and the creation will be accomplished. Will this inspiration—this creation—occur on the sixth great day?

I see no necessity for pressing this parallelism to further details, yet I think it will be found accurate, even scientific. Man first has a corporate existence; he is endowed with vitality when conceived; various members of his body are added later. Cells, endowed with life, come into organic connection with him all along before, *and even*

after his birth as an individual, when finally he becomes a living soul. The Church's ministry corresponds to the physical organism. Its organs are various, including prophets, teachers, apostles, evangelists—organs of both honor and dishonor. The body is made up of individuals, corresponding to cells, each having its own divine life. These pass out, and are replaced. The Church was "conceived" at Pentecost, its organs and members developed subsequently, and it will be "born," that is created as the One New Man, when Christ comes to glorify it.

To sum up for the sake of clearness: The Church as an organization, the Church Visible, referring to its present ministry, began its existence before Christ's Ascension on the fourth day. This aspect of the Church is typified by the moon. But the Church, which is the blessed company of all the faithful, which is to become the Church Triumphant, began its existence after Christ's ascension on the fifth day, for none

were baptized[1] into Christ until that time. This aspect of the Church is typified by the Body. This, the Church Militant, including the Church Visible, receives the divine breath: first, in the form of the Holy Spirit given to its ministry, of which the Sacrament of Ordination is the sign; second, in the form of the spiritual life and grace which the individual members receive through the other Sacraments; third, it will receive the divine breath at the coming of our Lord for His own, when the Church Invisible, and its every member, will receive the fulness of the life of Christ. The first two forms of inspiration are still in process of operation, and will be completed and perfected by the third, the Church Corporate with its ministry then having received the fulness of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of its mission and office, and each individual member having been added and perfected. Then, when in Jesus Christ shall all be made

[1] That is in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. See the Institution, Matt. 28: 19; and re-baptism, Acts 19: 3.

alive, will be the time of the true creation of this Body, the One New Man.

So even yet Christ's substance, frame, Body, is being made in secret, skilfully, curiously wrought in the lower part of the earth (Psa. 139:15). And the same inspired prophet, who wrote of this mysterious process, in speaking of Jehovah giving dominion to the king (Psa. 110:3), also declared, "In the day of thy power, in the splendors of holiness, out of the womb of the dawn to thee shall spring forth the dew of thy youth." The dawn is still before daybreak; when "it began *to dawn towards* the first day" it was still the seventh. The "womb of the dawn" is the source or conditions which produce the new day, or else the time preceding. Thus the youthful freshness of Christ's Body will spring forth at the close of a day, the dawn of a new age, from the conditions which cause it.

Then, since the Body of Christ is not yet completed, I think it might be truly said that the second Adam is not yet completed. But the Christ is, though his fulness is not yet

made manifest. The word Christ essentially signifies the Anointed, the Destined, the Coming One. Jesus is the Christ; the Church is *of* the Christ. Moreover, the words of Jesus and His Apostles show that the Body is an integral part of Christ. Jesus was complete in His Divinity, His Humanity, and His personality. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. But the Messiah, the Christ, is still the Coming One; not only He who came, but He who is to come. Jesus came, the fulness of God; Jesus is coming, the fulness of Christ. Jesus the God-man had a body; Jesus the risen Lord has a body; but the Body of Jesus the King, who is the Christ, is still in the process of formation. It is not yet completed, fulfilled, made up, put into its final condition. When it is, Christ's fulness will be made manifest. Then the Second Adam will have been created.

In the figure, the Church Corporate corresponds to the physical Adam; Jesus gives life, the soul; the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father through the Son, is the

quickening Spirit, and will make the Body such when it finally partakes of Christ's nature, and becomes like Him. And, while the head is not complete without the body, yet the head is really "all in all," it being the life, the body being but its organs. And this view reconciles the difficulties which arose in trying to make Adam a type of Jesus, while it presents difficulties only of the kind which the doctrine of the Trinity furnishes.

Now, whether or not this event of the transformation of the Church shall take place within the thousand-year period, yet if it shall occur before the great day of rest, then the Second Adam will be created on the sixth great day, and all necessary conditions for the complete parallelism of facts between the figure and the thing portrayed, so far as the man Adam is concerned, will be fulfilled.

III.—THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

I have seen the claim put forth, that the Church is to remain to the end of time, and that it will finally gather into itself all the

people of the earth. In support of this contention the words of St. Paul, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and St. John's Revelation, "The kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ," are quoted as implying that these men taught that the whole world would sometime accept and *be received into the Church.*

On the other hand, Bishop Grafton has written:

"It must ever be remembered that Christianity is not destined to conquer the world, which will more and more reject it, and finally formulate a counterfeit Christianity. Its Christ will not be the God-man . . . It will be the great and final apostasy. Now the Church's mission is to gather out of this world and train the predestined number of the elect for that kingdom of righteousness which is to be evolved out of the present condition of creation. The heart of the Christian beats with joy as he looks forward to the unveiling of Christ, and the ushering in of that new sphere of life in

which all sin and evil will be forever banished for those who attain it."

Now, while the Church is destined to conquer the world, yet this will not be until *after* Christ has come for the Church. Nowhere do prophecies give us any reason to look for universal righteousness at the time of His coming. Instead, that time is repeatedly described as one of sin, faithlessness, and apostasy. In the meantime, the mission of the Church is to gather and prepare the company of the faithful who will *reign* with Christ. When this is accomplished, Jesus Christ will be finally revealed, and the Age of righteousness and Christ's established kingdom will begin.

In his revelation of Jesus Christ St. John tells of a woman clothed with the sun, under her feet the moon, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, who brings forth a man-child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. And as this man-child is brought into being, it is caught up to heaven, *even to the throne of God.* That this symbol does not refer to the Birth and Ascension

of Jesus is quite evident from the fact that St. John wrote after Christ had ascended to His Father, while he declared that he saw the vision, and testified of things which were to come to pass. But it is a true picture of the mystical Body, brought forth of a wonderful being, the Church Militant, who is clothed with that great Light of the world, who rests firmly on the corporate, the organization, or the "moon" aspect of the Church, and is crowned with the glory of the twelve apostolic stars. Christ, the Sun, clothes the Church Militant with His Righteousness; only upon the moon aspect of the Church, with its organized and authorized ministry, receiving through the Holy Spirit and reflecting the light of Truth, could it stand; the crown of authority was given through the twelve Apostles. The woman is the Church Militant; the Man-Child is the Church Triumphant.

But when, not in years nor centuries, but relatively, shall we look for the time of bringing forth of this Man-Child? Is it to be at the end of the world that the Church

will be taken away, or will the Millenium of righteousness and Christ's rule follow its transfiguration?

In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, St. Paul says: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Also in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he writes: "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Who are the "we" referred to? In the first epistle mentioned, St. Paul addresses "The Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ"; in the latter he writes to "The

Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus our Lord." The "we," then, refers to the Church and its members, the faithful in Christ. The unrighteous dead are not included in this promise and hope. The whole Church is included.

It is evident, then, that at Christ's coming in the air, (1) the dead in Christ will be raised and (2) the living faithful will be changed, and (3) both the resurrected and the changed will be taken up to remain with the Lord. The Church, therefore, will be taken away, for all its members will go.

Will this be the end of the world?

Now turn to the twentieth chapter of the Revelation of St. John, and read: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *But the rest of the dead lived not again until* the thousand years were finished. This is the first resur-

rection." Does not this refer to the taking away of Christ's Church?

A "thousand years," then, are to follow the first resurrection, the taking away of the Church, and preceding the general resurrection. So it becomes evident that (1) Christ comes "in the air" for the Church before the end of the world, since the general resurrection, when Christ comes to judge the unrighteous dead is at the end of the world (see the twentieth chapter), and (2) during the "thousand years" the Church will reign with Christ. It is, therefore, not as the Church Militant, but as the Church Triumphant that it reigns for a season before the end of the world.

But, after the "thousand years" are expired, Satan "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." There will be people still living on the earth, then, and there will be saints, too. And yet the Church is gone. But we shall see later.

When, indeed, does St. John conceive that "the kingdoms of this world are become

the kingdom of our Lord *and of His Christ?"* He says it is [2]to be when the nations are angry, and God's "wrath is come and the time of the dead, that they should be judged (κριθῆναι, aor. I inf. pass., to be estimated, decided, chosen, vindicated), and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, small and great." Is not this the time when the Church has been taken away from the earth? But the "nations were angry." Has the Church, then, won them all? Is this the wrath of the final judgment, or the great tribulation preceding the age of righteousness? May it not be the time when the devil is cast out of heaven, the "hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try all them that dwell upon the earth," preceding the time when Satan is bound for a thousand years?

Nor did Jesus teach that the Church would gather all the world into *its* fold.

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[2] Rev. 11.

Speaking of His coming, He said, "*then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins . . . and five were foolish." Will these five belong to the elect, the faithful? He also said that at His coming, with the sound of the trumpet He would send His angels to gather His elect. Will this include all the living, or, of the many called, are a few chosen?

St. Paul did not say that all men would be made alive, but, rather, that all *who are in Christ* shall be made alive at His coming.

What is St. Peter's opinion as expressed in the third chapter of his second epistle? "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming?" Did he look for a universal acceptance of Christ during the time of the Church before His coming?

And yet, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess at some later time that Jesus Christ is Lord, because after the elect are taken, the day of the Lord will follow (1)

the day of His vengeance, and (2) the day of His undisputed rule.

St. Paul says (II. Thes. 1:10), that Jesus shall come to be glorified in His saints, and that, when He shall be revealed from heaven *with His angels, or messengers of power,* He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. Then connecting in thought the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him, he goes on to describe the anti-christ, and to say that the day of the Lord shall not come until he, claiming to be God, shall sit in the Temple. This is doubtless the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, and by Christ, when referring to His coming. The Apostle then puts them in mind that he had already explained this mystery to them, and that they knew what restrained this "man of sin" from appearing before the fixed time; that He that restraineth must be taken out of the way before the anti-christ can be revealed. What is this that restraineth but the Church, or the power of the Spirit within the Church?

But I think enough has been said to show clearly that we have reason to look for Christ's appearing for His Church long before the end of the world, and that at this event the whole world will not have accepted Him, although all will have had an opportunity, since the gospel will have been preached to all. Then shall follow the great tribulation, and the power of the anti-christ, "whom the Lord shall consume . . . and destroy with the brightness of His coming," this time to the earth, when He shall reign in righteousness.

In announcing the text of His first great sermon, Jesus, having read from the prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me . . . to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," stopped short, because the rest was not applicable to the time, and to His first mission. Instead the day of vengeance of our God, the comfort for *all* that mourn, the beauty for ashes, and all that follows, belongs to the seventh great day, or the time which just precedes it.

IV.—THE SEVENTH DAY.

On the seventh day of creation God rested. Of this day, neither evening nor morning is recorded. It became the sabbath of rest. Its weekly observance has been known as the Lord's day. But this must not be confused with the Christian Sunday. St. Paul tells us (Col. 2:16, 17) that the Sabbath is a shadow of things to come. It is a shadow of the Lord's Day in the future; a day of rest and holiness.

That there is such a rest, no one can doubt. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). A keeping of a Sabbath, is another rendering of the text. And, as the Apostle explains, one who enters into that rest shall repose from his labors, just as God ceased from His.

God speaks of this as His rest, saying: "They shall not enter into My rest." "And His rest shall be glorious." But where and when is this rest?

Jesus said, "My father worked hitherto, and I work." But we must not forget that Jesus is God, and that His rest is that of

which the Sabbath day is the shadow. The question which concerns us now is, has this day of rest come, or is it to follow the sixth great day, namely, the time when the One New Man shall be created? Is the day of rest a seventh great day?

David said (see Psalm 132:8-14 inclusive), "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Now Zion is God's chosen people: First Israel, the nation; and secondly, and specifically, the Church which Israel typifies, and for whose sake Israel was rejected, they having rejected Jesus. In the seventy-eighth Psalm we have a prophecy of this rejection. God had dwelt in the tabernacle of Shiloh, but forsook it, He and the *ark* of His strength, and chose another dwelling place, namely, Zion. Tabernacling there for a time, He built His sanctuary, which He established forever. Likewise rejecting Israel, He chose the Gentiles, is now tabernacling with them, and will dwell in the new sanctuary, in the perfected kingdom

in Zion. And so David says: "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the *ark* of Thy strength," which is the Church. At that time the Church shall be transformed to the throne of His kingdom; for the Lord hath sworn in truth unto David that the children shall sit upon His throne to the end of the Age.

This is Christ's peaceable kingdom after the victorious restoration of Israel, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is "in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the *second time* to recover the remnant of His people," "and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah" (Isa. 2). It was when Jesus preached the advent of His kingdom that the Lord set His hand the first time to recover the remnant of His people. But the kingdom of heaven was withdrawn from them. St. Paul refers to this second time, when he writes to the Romans (Rom. 2) that blindness has happened to Israel, "until the fulness of the

Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." When the fulness of the Gentiles is come, then Israel shall be recovered, and Christ's peaceable kingdom established. This will be the day of universal righteousness, when peace shall be extended to Jerusalem like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; and in that day His rest shall be glorious!

Consider the import of these prophecies. "When the fulness of the Gentiles is come," must mean, not the time when the Gentiles were admitted to the hope of Israel, at the time of the Epiphany, but rather the completion of this time, and the entire work of gathering the Gentiles into the Church. This is evidently the force which the same term, fulness, has in the twelfth verse of the same chapter, referring to Israel. The fulness of the Gentiles is the completed Church, just as the Church is the fulness of Christ, and in Christ the fulness of God dwells. When the fulness of the Gentiles is come, the Church will have gathered all of its members into itself.

After this time Israel shall be restored. Jesus implied this when He said: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh . . . When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this [3]race shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." (See Luke 21.)

Notice that St. Paul says: "*So* all Israel shall be saved." It is through the fulness, the completed Church, that Israel is to be saved. For is not the Deliverer which is to come out of Zion this One New Man, the completed Church, which is the mystical Body and the fulness of Christ, vivified and glorified by its Head, Jesus the God? Jesus the son of David, and the transfigured

[3] γενεὰ, progeny; hence race is a legitimate translation.

Church, which comes out of the visible, earthly Church, the Zion? When the Church shall reign with Christ, He "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This is the time of Christ's peaceable kingdom. Then peace shall extend beyond the Gentiles to Jerusalem, which is Israel, and the glory of the Gentiles shall also extend like a flowing stream, on and on. And so the heavenly city Jerusalem shall be built on Christ's kingdom of mount Zion, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men.

In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, we are told that salvation, and the kingdom of God, and the power of Christ, is come, when the devil is cast out of heaven. This had not occurred when St. John wrote, for he distinctly said these things were yet to come. Moreover, Christ is now in the presence of God, making intercession for us (Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:34; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1). Is He not there because the devil is accusing us before God, day and night? (Rev. 12:10; Job 1:9; Zach. 3:1.) But if so, he is not yet cast out of heaven,

and the kingdom of God and the power of Christ is not yet come.

Now how is the devil to be cast out? St. John infers that Michael and his angels cast him out. Does he not mean Christ and the Church? "*They* overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11). These are the saints of the Church, and they overcame him. But this occurs after the Man-child is caught up into heaven, and when the devil knows that he has but a short time on the earth. Surely, this is not the present time of the Church, but the time of the resurrected, transfigured Church.

We see, then, a deeper sense in which the Son *of man* is Lord of the Sabbath. There is to come a period in the history of the earth, when Christ's kingdom shall be, not merely set up, as in the present, but firmly established, and Christ's rule made both real and effective; when righteousness shall flourish, and all enemies be conquered, of which the last will be death itself. And

this will be the Lord's day. Though it will be preceded by tribulation, yet it will all be light,[4] with neither evening nor morning, but all as the glorious noon, for all shall know God, from the least to the greatest. It will be the great Sabbath Day, of which the old Jewish Sabbath was the shadow. And Christ and His Church shall rule on that day, sitting on the throne. And when the last enemy is put under His feet, then shall He deliver up the kingdom unto God. And He shall reign for ever and ever! Alleluia!

Since this event is to follow that of the completion of the mystical Body of Christ, the chronological sequence is such that in them both we find an accurate parallel for the recorded facts concerning the sixth and seventh days of the creation.

If, however, it is claimed that the sequence is not reasonably established, and that, as some claim, the Church in its present form is to continue on until the end of the world, I submit that the accuracy of the

[4] "It shall come to pass that at eventide it shall be light."

parallel in all of its other features must have much weight. While I recognize the truth that such "circumstantial" evidence, such analogous reasoning, is not in itself proof, yet I contend that, as the human mind is constituted, such reasoning is more or less convincing, and may practically amount to proof.

As the Greek philosophers saw the little cosmos mirroring the great cosmos, so we see in a deeper sense the little material world shadowing the more real, spiritual world. And as we continue to study the Scriptures along this line, we shall be more and more convinced of the truth that the things which we see show forth the deep things of God, and that both sacred story and prophecy have more than one legitimate interpretation. And that only as we find these various applications can we drink deeply of the truth.

II.
The Church Militant

II.

I.—THE CHURCH MILITANT.

"What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" A momentous question, indeed! He is the Son of man, for He "hath power on earth to forgive sins"; and He "shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him; then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." But He is also the Son of God, and "when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

St. John wrote a book, saying it was the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." It was to show things which must come to pass. In the first three chapters he gives some directions and rebukes to seven of the Asiatic Churches.

What have these three chapters to do with the subject, which he himself states to be the revealing of Jesus Christ?

Jesus came to reveal God. He Himself was something of a mystery, so that the question, "what think ye of Christ? whose son is He?" was a frequent one. He Himself promised that sometime He should be revealed, and the Apostles refer to this Revelation. St. John prophetically describes it. Have these messages to the seven Churches anything to do with this event? Their position in the book logically leads to an affirmative answer.

I have no doubt that these first chapters constitute real, specific messages to the individual Churches named. But I think that we also find a deeper significance; in fact, nothing less than a prophetic history in boldest outline of the one, true, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The writing is declared to be a *prophecy;* it speaks of things which must shortly begin. Its story is the unfolding of a series of events which are themselves the processes of

the revealing, the unveiling, of Jesus Christ and His glory, which also shall be revealed in us, and of which we shall be partakers. Its opening chapters are not merely of local application and reference; they are part of the wonderful divine drama which was then about to begin—the drama of the revelation of the king.

St. John makes salutation to the seven Churches which are in Asia. This seven is indicative of its comprehensiveness. It is the Universal Church, located in Asia, the [5]low place, the bog, or mire, of the world. It is the Church *Militant*. Then follows the *mystery* of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks, which are the seven angels and their Churches.

What is this mystery?

The key is found in the etymology of the names of these Churches. The ancient Hebrews chose names which were in themselves significant, enshrining historical incidents, biographical reminiscences, and so on.

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[5] ἄσιος, slimy, miry. See Liddell & Scott's Lexicon.

The names of places denote something deeper than mere location. This is well known to be the case throughout the pages of Holy Scripture. So, while it is impracticable to attempt to translate scriptural proper names, yet in order to get the full significance of passages containing them, it is necessary to look to their root meanings.

Still this is the key merely, it being no proper proof. The evidence, as far as it goes, is found in the fact that the history of the Church thus far has proceeded by characteristic epochs, or eras, corresponding to the character of the messages to the seven Churches, and in the order given.

The word Ephesus etymologically implies the idea of appetite, desire, seeking after, *love* (See ἐφίημι, Liddell and Scott's Lexicon. Also the Standard Bible Dictionary, Funk and Wagnalls Co., says that the name Ephesus refers to the goddess of procreation.) This is the point of commendation to the Angel of the Ephesian Church; thou "hast borne and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast labored and

hast not fainted." However, he had left his first love. Still he was devoted.

Now this statement concerning the Ephesian Bishop was also applicable to the first days of the early Church. Compared with all other stages, its chief characteristic was a reaching out for, was love and devotion. It earnestly and persistently sought the Kingdom of God; its labor was for Christ's sake; neither honor nor reputation allured men to this work; martyrdom had not yet become a glory; the attraction of apologetics and religious controversy was absent; as a religion it had no aesthetic nor kindred attractions, nor did it offer any kind of worldly inducements; it did not even afford a livelihood for at least some of its Bishops; neither philanthropic nor humanitarian interests, as such merely, could account for it; an intense loyal love for its founder pervaded the whole Church. A socialism built up, not on fraternal, but on Christian love; a tender care of all the Churches at the expense of stripes and imprisonment; a zealous missionary spirit; a

weekly love feast; an early communion; a first day offering—such was the Church in the days of the Apostles.

Nevertheless it is evident through St. Paul's Epistles, that before the last of the Apostles had entered into their rest, the Church had left its first love.

It is highly significant, also, that the Ephesian Bishop had found to be liars them that claimed themselves to be Apostles, and were not. The term here used is neither Bishop nor presbyter; there is no occasion for confusion. If the word Apostle referred only to the twelve, there could have been no need to try them which claimed to be Apostles; the identity of the twelve was perfectly evident. In the day when St. John wrote, then, there were men who were usurping the office of the Apostles, and this Bishop was commended for exposing and opposing them.

It is not hard to find the idea of bitterness and anguish underlying the name Smyrna, meaning myrrh. To this Bishop of Smyrna and his Church belonged tribula-

tion, and poverty, and imprisonment, and trial, even unto death. And this description leads the mind at once to those days of trial, when the Church, having been planted through all the civilized world by the love-inspired Apostles, was subject to those fierce persecutions under the Roman Emperors, which have never been exceeded in extent or cruelty, even in the days of the Inquisition. In the later time it was individual liberty which suffered; under the Romans it was the Church as a whole which was persecuted, thus characterizing this period.

It has been said that there were ten of these persecutions, and that they lasted ten years, a year for a day. But since ten in scriptural language is significant of complete testing, I think a deeper meaning is indicated by these ten days of tribulation. Surely the Church was then severely and well tested for its subsequent work.

As men of Smyrna, instigated by Satan, were profanely claiming to be Jews, thus refusing their higher citizenship, so in the

days of persecution there were many who, tempted of the devil, blasphemously denied their spiritual heritage, both in recantation and in the Judaistic and Gnostic heresies. Possibly, too, this may refer to the false ministry organized by Montanus.

It is not a very long philosophical road from the name Pergamos to the term polygamy. *Per* (πὲρ) and *gamos* (γάμος), much marriage, both as to the place and the time of Pergamos. False doctrine, both of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes, was the specific work of Satan in the Church of Pergamos. So in the years which followed the Roman persecutions, spiritual adultery was the devil's chief accomplishment. The Apostolic faith, illegally married to Greek and Oriental philosophy, brought forth those great heresies, the denial of our Lord's divinity and of His humanity, which has been at the bottom of all subsequent heresy, and has resulted in stumbling blocks to God's true children, through unholy, polluted food, and in all manner of religious lewdness. Because of the far-reaching effects of

these heretical teachings, it may be said with truth that this age in Church history was most specifically the seat of Satan.

Make careful note, however, that it was not the Church which denied the faith: neither in Pergamos, where she held fast to Christ's name, when Antipas (antipater) was the faithful martyr; nor in the time of the heresies, when the early Fathers gladly suffered for the faith; nor in this third age, when the virtual martyr Athanasius was so instrumental in the Church's holding fast to Christ's name, and in refusing to deny the faith.

The Greek *thuo* (θύω) means to sacrifice, to offer; *ateires* (ἀτειρής) means untiring; therefore Thyatira may mean a serving, working Church. The angel of the Church in Thyatira was praised for work, and love, and service, and faith, and patience—all characteristic qualities of the Church in the middle ages. It was a Church of love, manifested in all its work, not so much a personal love of the Christ as with the early Church—as a love for the Church

itself; it was a Church of service, as witnessed especially through the manifold ministrations of the monastic orders; of faith, as evidenced in the gifts and offerings which made possible its vast number of costly architectural monuments and institutions; of endurance, shown by its history throughout the dark ages of feudal strife.

Moreover, its last works were more than the first: more literally in the last, than in the earlier, darker days—more in ministration, in charity, in intellectual life, and in its sacrificial praise; more, too, in so far as the later monastic orders—the mendicant Orders of St. Dominic and of St. Francis—were more instrumental in evangelistic work, in educational and charitable work; and more in the work of trying to purify itself from ignorance, superstition and error.

Notwithstanding, there were a few things against this Church of the mediæval ages.

I think that in Scripture a woman is usually taken to personify governments. Now through all these ages the ideal was

that the Church and State were one. But at first the State was supreme. The political power called herself a prophetess, a divinely appointed ruler. She taught Christ's servants to worship the idols of mammon and worldly power, and to live on the things offered to these idols. The Church permitted the corrupt, political system to seduce Christ's special servants, the clergy. No one will deny that, in all the centuries of ecclesiastical history, this condition of political corruption in State and in Church was worse in the middle ages, and more characteristic of it, than of any other time.

Then came the days when the New Learning, the new Greek, printing, the giving of the Bible in the common tongue, and other features of the general awaking of thought and spiritual life, brought forth the preaching of reform in Church and State—the days when Christ called the Prophetess to repentance, through Savonarola and other like preachers, through Church councils and synods, and through the general

call for more or less reform which preceded the days of the Reformation. But she repented not. "The kings of the earth sat themselves together, and the rulers take council together, against the Lord AND *against His anointed*" in very deed!

Political upheavals followed. Great Britain and most of Europe were cast into the same bed of tribulation with her, and her heretical, illegitimate children were born. They named themselves Puritans; they called the time of the beginning (not of the development) the Renaissance! And, significantly, they named this movement Humanism. And essentially it was such!

No one can deny the fact that the basic trouble of the Reformation was political; and, had the Church been free from this political adultery, the struggle would not have been an ecclesiastical one, nor would the Sects have been organized.

Highly significant is the next statement, which you will find in the twenty-third verse of the second chapter of this Revelation: "I will kill her children with death."

Observe the future tense. Observe the fact that it is the children, not the Prophetess, which are to be killed. Then shall all the Churches know that Christ is "He which searcheth the reins and the hearts"! Are Presbyterianism and Congregationalism to persist?

"And unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine"—unto the rest of the Church, of that mediæval age, in the East, and in other parts of the world—was any other burden put upon them?

Sardis, thrashed out, *that which remains.* Such is the meaning. After the exodus from the Church caused by the Reformation, what remained? Was it not the Church? Now what was the real condition of the Church at this time? Did it not have the name of being very much alive? And is it not generally agreed now that it was dead in the sense that "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth"? Surely, her works were not found perfect before God. But there were a few names, even in the post-reformation church, which did not

defile their garments. They became watchful, and strengthened the things which remained, that were ready to die. They remembered how they had received and heard; they held fast; and He came not unto them as a thief in the night. And the American Church had no small part in this watchfulness and strengthening of things ready to die. Are not these undisputed facts of history?

Philadelphia, brotherly love. What word can more aptly describe the spiritual life in the Church to-day? This has been a common theme of sermons for several years. When, in the history of nations, have great disaster and suffering brought such prompt and widespread sympathy and practical aid? How else can be explained the peace conferences, efforts at conciliation and arbitration, charitable work, juvenile courts, prison improvements, "foundations" of various kinds, political and social reforms, conservation efforts for the sake of posterity, Church unity movements, and wonderful missionary efforts, to mention

but a few of the evidences of fraternal feeling?

And observe that this is fraternal love, which is not the same thing as the love which characterized the first stage of the Church. The emphasis is laid not on "the first and great commandment," but on the second "which is like unto it." Nor is it the love of the Church as an Institution, as in the Middle ages. The Laymen's Missionary Movement has demonstrated this. Everywhere it is reported that men are interested, not in the religious or in the ecclesiastical, so much as in the humanitarian aspect of missions.

But while the present Church age is thus characterized, there are other qualities, or features, not specifically characteristic of this particular age—for they belong to the Church throughout each of its stages—but to which the times give emphasis. The Church has a little strength. Moreover, it has kept His Word, both in the faith once delivered to it, and in its sacramental aspect; "agreeing in the truth of the Holy

Word," "setting forth the true and lively Word," and "duly receiving the Holy Word"—the Word made flesh.

Furthermore, the Church has not denied His name, for the true name of Jesus Christ is GOD. But the Unitarian doctrine in its developed form has implicitly and explicitly denied His name. In its origin the Unitarian doctrine seems to have been an undeveloped philosophical theory, unduly emphasizing the truth of the Unity. I doubt there having been any[6] intention really to deny the divinity of our Lord. But in late years this doctrine, pushed to its logical conclusion, has declared emphatically that Jesus Christ was nothing more than a man, neither more divine nor more sinless than many other men.

The Church has throughout all the ages kept and affirmed these truths of the Word, and the name of Jesus Christ. In the face of the characteristic, or the wide-spread heretical practice and teaching, it has

[6] I am speaking now of the modern development of Unitarianism.

become worthy of note as a matter for divine commendation.

But there are marvellous things said to this Philadelphian Church. Thus far I have not resorted to imagination; I have merely mentioned what must be perfectly obvious—that is, how the mystery of these Churches has been found almost word for word in the most simple lines of the history of the Church during the past centuries. For that which is yet unfulfilled, it is necessary to use the imagination, but yet with caution.

"Behold," reads the Revelation, "behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Loved thee, whom to kill they had thought it were doing God a service! To worship before thy feet! What think ye, you who see no prospect of Church unity? Is there not even now a rapidly growing tendency to make this prediction come to pass?

But read again. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Do we know nothing about this open door? An open door is an invitation, or an opportunity to go in. Has the Missionary Movement no significance? Is it too much to hope that the gospel of Jesus Christ shall have been preached to all the world within the time of the present generation? An open door, and no man can shut it! What think ye of Christ?

II.—THE REWARD.

The salutation to the Churches is worthy of note: He who holds the keys of hell and of death is described unto the Church who had left its first love as "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand" of power, and who walks among the Churches. In the time of toil and endurance and the trial of false apostles, Christ was the divine authority and protection to the Church, and the divine life and Presence in it.

To the afflicted Smyrna He is "the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive," In the time of destitution and terror, and

the temptation to apostasy, He was the living, the supreme, the only hope and sure salvation.

To the Church of Pergamos, where Satan dwelt, He is the holder of a sharp, two-edged sword. So in the time of the heretical teaching, when the Church held fast to His name, not denying the faith, He was the Truth, and the power of its defence.

To the working Church of Thyatira He hath eyes like a flame to try their work, and feet like fine brass with which to destroy. Likewise He became the Judge of the labors of the mediæval Church, trying as with fire all its work, and His feet shall yet break in pieces all vestiges of corrupt political power over the Church.

To the Church of Sardis, the remnant, He hath the Seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. So also to the Church of, or after the time of the Reformation, perfect grace in all its forms and channels, all the powers and inspiration of the Holy Ghost as instituted by Christ in the Church continued to operate; and the continuity, the

Faith and the divine life of the Church were preserved.

To the Philadelphian Church, with its open door, He is holy and true, and hath the key of David, and openeth and shutteth. To the Church *now* He calls attention to the fact that He is holy because He is the only Son of God; He is true, and will perform all His wonderful promises; He hath the key of the house of David, and He will open the door to His throne, and none shall close it, and the Church shall sit upon that throne.

To the indifferent Laodiceans He is the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation, and the amen. He will be a faithful and true witness to all men, even when the Church is not; He, the beginning of the Creation, is about to finish the greatest of all creations, the Body of Christ, the company of first-born ones; He is the Amen, for He is true and faithful to His word, and His fiat has already gone forth; He accomplishes.

In all these descriptive terms we see not only the picture of the Christ as given in

the first chapter of this Revelation, but also the distinctive, specific and most prominent manifestation of Christ in the historical Church throughout the centuries. It is significant that it is said to be a vision of one like unto the Son of man. Do not forget that the Body of Christ is a part of the Son of man.

Through these specific manifestations of the power of Christ in the Church, has been the continuation of its life from age to age, so that the devil and his hosts have not overcome it. Nor will they! Though the Church become lukewarm, poor, blind, naked and boastful, yet it will fulfil its proper purpose for that time even.

Still more interesting are the promises for overcoming: The Ephesians who return to their first love are to eat of the tree of life; the martyrs of Smyrna, resisting unto death, shall not be hurt of the second death; in Pergamos, refusing the unholy food and holding fast to Christ's name is rewarded with the hidden manna, and a white stone with a new, secret name written on it;

Thyatira, keeping His works to the end, shall be given power over the nations, even though the sects appear to triumph; Sardis, strengthening the things ready to die and holding fast to the faith, will be clothed in the white of righteousness, its name preserved in the book of life, and confessed before the Father as Christ's true Church.

The Philadelphian who overcometh shall be made a pillar in the temple of God. A pillar is a mighty important member of a building! He shall go no more out of the true sanctuary. Moreover he shall receive the name of GOD, written upon him in transforming glory, when the whole body of the faithful shall be raised in the image of the heavenly, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints." Also shall be written upon him the name of the city of God, which comes down out of heaven, in fulfilment of our Lord's promise of inheriting the kingdom, which flesh and blood cannot inherit. Above all shall be written upon him the new name of Christ. But

Christ, the Lamb and priestly intercessor, is *now* the Saviour; His new name will be king, for He will be the Lion of the tribe of Judah enthroned. So the victor of Philadelphia, receiving the name of God, of the Church, and the new name of Christ the King; becoming one with Christ through the resurrection, being changed from Church Militant to Church Triumphant, and redeemed and made kings unto God to reign on the earth with Christ, until all enemies have been put under His feet—the victor of Philadelphia is made the perfected and glorified Body, the fulness of Christ. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "He shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, *then* shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

Each of the first three Churches is united, though having teachers of heresy; even so the Church was a unit until the time of the early Fathers was past. The letters to the fourth, fifth and sixth Churches indicate the presence of schismatic bodies.

Likewise, since the time of the great heresies the Church has been, not only divided, but also troubled with heretical and sectarian bodies. And in the letters of these three Churches special promises are made to a part only—promises beyond those "to him that overcometh." Unto the Thyatirans, who have not the doctrine of Jezebel, it is promised that no other burden shall be put upon them; the faithful in Sardis shall walk with Christ in white, being worthy; the Philadelphians, having kept the word of Christ's endurance, will be kept "out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Here is a positive declaration of a specific time of temptation, or trial, not to a part, but to all the world. The promise indicates that when it comes the Philadelphian Church shall have been removed. I think that before that event Christ will come, not to the earth, but "in the air," and the Church Militant will become the Church Triumphant. Afterward the devil and his

angels will be cast out from heaven into the earth. Then, indeed, "woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." What else can this be but the trial for the whole habitable world, from which the Philadelphians are to be kept?

Observe what is said concerning His coming. Some of the Churches were warned that He would come quickly if they did not repent; He would come to the Ephesians to remove the Church, if they did not return to their first love and works in time to prepare for the great martyrdoms; to the Church of Pergamos, to fight against heresy with the sword of His mouth if they did not repent their tolerance of the presence of them who held to the doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitanes; to the Church of Sardis, with the suddenness of a thief, if they did not strengthen the things about to die, and watch. To these Churches His coming was conditioned on their failure to repent, just as the continuation of the Church

from age to age depended upon this vigilance, and the overcoming of these specific elements of death.

The Church of Smyrna, in its anguish and steadfastness, needed no repentance, and no threat was made. It was in a condition which assured its continued existence. In Thyatira some had not the teachings, or doctrine of Jezebel, though the Angel had allowed the woman to teach and to seduce; therefore those who knew not the depths of Satan were given no other burden. But Jezebel was given space to repent, and did not. For this the strange punishment was predicted, and all those guilty with her were threatened with great tribulation if they did not repent. To Thyatira Christ did not threaten to come, for the whole Church was not contaminated with this taint of death. The Church was in condition to continue on, even though some branches might perish. It is significant that this period of Church history was the longest one, thus giving ample time for repentance and, also, that the threats made were fully accomplished.

But with Philadelphia both the promise and the warning are unconditional. To this Church Christ has said, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation," and "behold, I come quickly." This gives no chance for question; the statement is definite and positive. "Behold, I come quickly!"

In the first chapter St. John has significantly written, "behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." The Apostles looked for His speedy return. Did not Christ command them to do so? In every age since if I mistake not, the Church has looked and prayed for His return. Has this watching been in vain? Might He not have come had the Church in any age failed in the things demanded—requirements which were obviously essential to her continued existence? That such a coming would have been out of harmony with God's pre-ordained plans is no argument against it.

To Philadelphia He announced, "behold,

I come quickly," and the caution this time is, not repentance, but steadfastness to retain sacred mysteries entrusted to it. It is not a warning of His coming so much as a promise. To the others He would have come in judgment; now He is to come in redemption; lo, He comes with a crown! Coronation, more than mere victory, is the idea implied. "Hold that fast which thou hast." Thou hast the Faith, the Sacraments and the true Ministry! Thou hast the life and the inheritance! And the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee!

"But the gospel must first be published among all nations." And did not Christ Himself say, "then shall the end come?" The Disciples had asked Him, "what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age"—so it is written, *end of the age,* not of the world (See the Greek, αἰῶνος). The end of the gospel age; the beginning of the age of the kingdom. Is it not Catholic doctrine, that the Church shall preach the gospel to all the nations, and when the heathen have been offered the inheritance,

the number of Christ's elect shall be accomplished, and His kingdom shall come? Is not this the purpose of the open door which we see, and which is promised to the Philadelphian Church? Is not the Spirit saying this unto the Church? Has it not received power to witness unto the uttermost part of the earth? Has it not even now a little strength, and because of this, is it not being given, as never before, the opportunity to do so? Is not the Spirit saying, "hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown?" The coming of the kingdom will be when the Church enters the open door to the throne.

What can be the meaning of those words, seven times repeated, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches"? If nothing more than simple directions to seven specific congregations in Asia, would this be found in a work of such economy of space? Is it not rather, and obviously, an emphatic hint to look deep for the true significance of the message? And with the last four letters, where the applica-

tion to the historical Church is not so obvious, this claim for attention is made more emphatic by transposing it to the very last of the letter.

In scriptural use the number six indicates completed earthly work. The six Churches are acceptable to God; the seventh is rejected. Will the sixth stage complete the work of the Church Militant on earth?

To the [7]Laodicean church belong peculiar characteristics. Let us make careful note of them.

Because of its indifference Christ will spew it out of His mouth. It will never be assimilated, becoming a part of His body. It is increased with goods, and boasts of its riches. It is blind, and naked, and has none of the heavenly glory of tried gold. It has no point of commendation, no sure promise, but certain, positive, unconditional condemnation.

Schism is absent, for they claim to lack

[7] λαὸς, the common people. See Matt. 26: 5 *et al.* Common men opposed to their leaders. See Liddell & Scott's Lexicon.

nothing; how can it be otherwise? But so is the Lord Jesus it appears. Has the Church put Him out, even as Unitarianism has already banished Him from their faith? Behold, He stands at the door, and is knocking!

This Church is counseled to buy of Him. And, as He loves her, He rebukes and chastens her, admonishing her to repent. Can this refer to the great tribulation which is to try all that dwell on the earth?

But the promise is not to the Church, nor to any division of it. It is to the individual. "If any man hear and open the door." Not an open door at this time. It is fast closed. This is not the door of the heart, it is the door of the Church, and Christ is outside. If any man open the door, Christ promises to come in to him. The promise is to none other. Christ will sup with him and he with Christ.

Likewise, the individual that overcometh shall not be barred from a place on the throne; he shall sit and reign with Christ. But the Church itself shall be utterly re-

jected by the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Is, then, the seventh Church a part of the body of Christ, the One New Man, which is the end as well as the most marvellous of all creation? But even if the Church is gone those with whom Christ sups will be true saints.

But what is this seventh Church, the Church of the Laodiceans? (The[8] others are described as the Church in Ephesus, the Church in Smyrna, etc. This is termed, not the Church of Laodicea, but of the Laodiceans. *Textus receptus.*) It is the Church *of the Laity,*[9] or of the common people judged. So it must be translated. Is it not most significant?

This prophecy of the first six Churches indicates a chronological order. Does the seventh follow in time, a Church without an

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[8] No weight is to be attached to this peculiarity of form, unless we know that it was the form of the original manuscript. Authorities seem to disagree.

[9] λἀος, people, as opposed to leaders; δίκαιος, right, claim, equal, to judge; justly, rightly.

authorized ministry, a Church of laymen? Is it the Protestant ideal, a human institution following the Philadelphian Church in time, and fully realized?

If so, the Church will end her Ministry in the present Epoch with the fulfilling of the predictions of Christ's coming for her, when she will meet Him in the air, as recorded in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and elsewhere.

And then during that time of the seventh church may be expected to occur that great and final conflict, described in the succeeding chapters of the Revelation of St. John—the great tribulation—the final act of the Church's conflict and preparation for that perfect society, when the "tabernacle of God is with men," and Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and Christ and the Church, which is His Body, shall sit upon the throne, and His kingdom shall be established.

Thus we see why Jesus told St. Peter

that the gates of hell should not prevail against the Church. This statement is commonly interpreted to mean that the devil and all his hosts will not be able to overthrow the Church. But such a use of a figure would be to weaken rather than to strengthen the force of expression. Gates are not active. They will not fight. Their use is for defence, or, more properly, to stop passage. But our Lord expressed a deeper thought. Behind the gates of hades the imprisoned dead are confined. Yet those fast-barred doors cannot hold the righteous dead when the time shall come for them to take part in this final conflict, with its victorious termination. They shall be freed, for the gates shall not avail to hold them back. The Church shall share in Christ's triumphant power to overcome death. And this resurrection, to which the Church shall attain, is far more than the mere recall back to a life again, much more than any re-animation of the body. Like the bursting forth of a rose into full bloom on a fair June morning, it is the springing into life of a living organism, with all its powers

perfected, the One New Man, Christ and His Body, the Church Triumphant, through the resurrected life of which all the families and kindreds of the earth shall, in fulfilment of the promise, be blessed.

Thus shall He take up His great power and reign. "For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord had spoken it." "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night." Afterward they that make war with the Lamb shall be overcome, for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they rest from their labors; for their works follow with them." For the kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and His reign will be unto the age of ages, and all shall fear the Lord and glorify His name, as

all the nations come and worship before Him. Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Hallelujah!

III.
The Triumph

III.

THE TRIUMPH.

When St. John saw the Woman delivered of the man-child, destined to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, as soon as the devil had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who fled into the wilderness. Then this angry dragon began "to make war with the rest of her seed, with them that keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus." Following this, we find an account of the anti-Christ, and his counterfeit religion, and of the trial which is to come upon all them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 12-13).

Now if our interpretation be correct, we have seen that the seventh church, as such, has no part in the Church Triumphant. It is spewed out. But this seventh church is

a part of the Church Militant—that is, it is a continuation of the present Christian Church, I mean the body of professing Christians, which, in its entirety, is the Woman which brings forth the Man-Child. That this seventh Church is rich and contented shows that it is protected from persecution as the Woman was. But those individual members whom Christ loves and rebukes and chastens, those who open the door to Him, evidently compose the rest of the Woman's seed, who keep the Commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus. These faithful of the seventh Church are chastened and rebuked through the war which the devil makes with them. This tribulation of the faithful few is quite another thing from the persecution of the whole Church.

St. Paul refers to this in the second chapter of his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. He exhorts them "concerning the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him," that they be not troubled, because, as he says, there shall

be a falling away from the faith first (see I. Tim. 4:1); when the "man of Sin, the son of destruction, the one who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is an object of worship" will sit in the Temple of God, setting himself forth as God. What is this but the "abomination of desolation" of which Daniel wrote, and to which Jesus referred, and also the same Wild Beast coming up out of the sea, of which we are told in the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation of St. John? Notwithstanding a partial fulfilment of this prophecy at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, yet it was not completely fulfilled. Nor does the destruction of the Temple raise a barrier to its future occurrence, for will not the Temple be rebuilt according to prophecy?

St. Paul reminds them that they had been well instructed in this mystery, and that they know what it is that restrains this man of Sin from appearing before his set time. It is the Body of Christ which restraineth now, and when It is taken out of

the way the lawless one shall be revealed.

This coming of the man of Sin, St. Paul continues to explain, "is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." How accurately all this agrees with the words of St. John: In this is the tribulation of them that love the testimony of Jesus, for it is "given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." But the lukewarm of the Church shall be at peace, for "all that dwell on the earth shall worship Him, every one whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. If any man hath an ear let him hear." The lukewarm majority will be deceived and fall away; the faithful few will continue, even in persecution.

But though he deceive them that dwell on the earth by means of the signs which it is given him to do, yet him "the Lord shall

slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming." This manifestation of His coming is the appearance of the Christ with His saints in glory to rule the earth. Christ, with the Body, will, in time, overcome the devil with this counterfeit religion, punish all evil doers, and set up a kingdom, wherein all the enemies of humanity shall be overcome, the last of which will be death. At this time Israel will return and acknowledge Christ as God, after which all the world will do likewise. All of this constitutes the Triumph of the Church; this in part is the hope of our calling, the riches of the glory of our inheritance (see Eph. 1).

This is a great incentive to earnest missionary effort for all people who believe in our Lord, and who take Him at His word; one great reason which I have never heard presented directly, and only once or twice alluded to in passing, notwithstanding it seems to me the most appealing of all arguments for persistent and concentrated effort in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ before

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all people. To be sure, the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations and all classes is one of the most direct and positive commands of Jesus to His Church, and while this ought to be sufficient for every loyal disciple, yet a command is something different from an appeal, and in the work of our Lord, where there is so much on every hand which enlists the sympathies, we need the additional spur of all the stimulus which is to be had.

What can we do to hasten this coming, and thus bring about the blessed consummation?

When Jesus said to His disciples, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the whole inhabited earth for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come," they had asked Him two distinct questions, though I doubt their having realized that they were referring to two separate events. "Tell us when shall these things be?" they had asked, for He had just told them that the temple would be wholly destroyed. And immediately they

followed it with another question (in fact, with two others, for they are in a sense distinct): "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" In the discourse which followed, Jesus answered these queries and perhaps in a clearer manner than is indicated by the recorded reports of those who, perchance, did not comprehend its full significance.

The destruction of the Temple was an entirely distinct event from that of the coming of Christ, and of the end of the age. At any rate, I have never heard it suggested that the prophecies concerning our Lord's coming were fulfilled at the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem. Therefore, "the end" did not refer specifically to that event.

Moreover, it is a fact that, not only did our Lord not come at that time, but also the Gospel was not preached to the whole inhabited world. It had been preached to all the civilized nations, but not, as the Greek reads, to the whole inhabited earth. When it had reached all civilized lands wherein the Jews were, so that they had all received its

testimony, then came the end to the Temple, their city, and their nation so far as their authority was concerned. When in the future all the inhabited earth shall have heard its testimony, then shall come the end.

If this statement of our Lord was fulfilled in 70 A. D., then we are released from all further obligation for missionary work. Jesus did not command a repeated evangelization of the world. If the preaching to all nations was accomplished once, then the Church has received no further orders in the matter. But we hold that a chief work of the successors of the Apostles is to complete this mission of testifying to all nations. Indeed, not all the cities of Israel have yet been visited.

Therefore the coming of the end still refers to the future. We must observe that the term "then" is a distinct note of time. "Then shall the end come." When this Gospel shall have traveled world wide, we confidently expect the end to come.

But what is this "end" and what is its significance? Clearly, it is not the end of

the world. It is the end of the Age. So reads the Greek; so all scholars agree.

Our Lord and His Apostles taught the facts of not only the present and the Old Dispensations as distinct from each other, but also the Age of the kingdom to follow the Gospel Age, when righteousness shall flourish in this world, and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." None of the centuries so far has been thus characterized.

Moreover, as I have before shown, St. Paul fixed clearly and distinctly, though relatively, the time of the resurrection of the righteous dead. When Christ shall come their bodies shall be raised, and the living members of the body of Christ will be transformed and, together with resurrected saints, will join our Lord in the air, to be forever with Him. So the Apostle prays for the preservation of the soul and spirit and body "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (see I. Cor. 15 and I. Thess. 4 and 5). Therefore at this time the Church Mil-

itant will become the Church Triumphant; its present mission of perfecting the Body of Christ (which includes gathering in its members through preaching all things commanded to all the world) will have been accomplished, and it will sit on the throne and reign with Him. The "end" is the time of the enthroning of the Church—its transformation.

I have already shown that this is not the time of the general and final judgment. Only the Church will be taken. This is further shown by the words of Jesus: for when the Son of Man comes "then shall two men be in the field; one is taken and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left"; "two men shall be in one bed; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left" (see Matt. 24:40, and Luke 17:34). Furthermore, St. John tesifies concerning this first resurrection, that they are *all* blessed and holy, and that over them the second death hath no power; that they shall reign with Christ a thousand years, wherein is the explanation of the seer

beholding One with many crowns, and in the midst of the throne, the Lamb. For though many members, it is one Body, and this the Christ shall reign until all things are put in subjection unto Him. And in further and complete proof that the coming of our Lord for the Church is not the time of the end of the world and the general judgment, St. John positively declares that the "rest of the dead live not until the thousand years should be finished," at which time the earth and the sea and Hades shall give up their dead, and the *earth and the heavens shall flee away,* and every man be judged according to his works (see Rev. 20).

Is not all this testimony both clear and to the point, and did not Jesus teach us to pray for His coming? But I am not anxious to hasten the time when I must stand before the judgment throne. Are you? And yet the Church teaches that His coming is an event most earnestly to be longed for, and sought after! Wherefore "set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of

Jesus Christ" (I. Peter 1:13). He that hath this hope purifieth himself (see I. John 3:3).

This, then, is the significance of His coming; "we shall be changed"; "our bodies made like unto His glorious body"; we shall share in His divinity, His power, His throne, "for we shall be like Him and see Him as He is," and reign with Him. Then His kingdom shall be established, not merely set up, but made firm. So St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy, "I charge thee . . . *by His appearing and His kingdom.*" That is the time when the kingdom of this world shall become "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign until the age of ages." The kingdom of this world is not yet the kingdom of Christ! Who dare insult His intelligence and His power by so claiming? Christ does not rule the world. He rules over His people selected out of the world, but any one who affirms that Christ now rules over the world, either knows nothing of the misery and sin, and iniquity, and degradation, and lawlessness, and religious

scorn, and the traffic in souls, and the worship of the devil, and blasphemy, in the best of civilized Christendom, to say nothing of non-Christian lands, or else He means something quite different by the terms rule and reign than I understand them to mean. But every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess when He shall take up His power and reign, "at the consummation of the Age." Those are the words used! "The Son of Man shall send forth His messengers, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity" (see Matt. 13:4). This is the work of the Church Triumphant, made one with Christ—to rule the kingdom, and put all things in subjection under His feet, when Christ shall fill all things. Then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, when the Son of Man shall be revealed. The Son of God was revealed when Christ first came; the Son of Man will be revealed when He again appears. He came first to reveal God; He comes to reveal Himself.

This is the significance of His glorious second appearance. This is what we are taught to hope for at the end of this present Gospel age.

This is the time when the Man-Child "shall shepherd the nations with a rod of iron." Hear the words of the prophet Malachi: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me"; (Did not Jesus so declare that Elijah must first come and restore all things, and was it not likewise revealed to St. John at Patmos?) "and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, He cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's sope: and He will sit as a refiner, and He will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jeru-

salem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years.

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not Me, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. 3).

Does not all of this still refer to the future? Show, if you can, that it referred to the time of Christ's Incarnation. Study this prophecy, bit by bit, and see if it does not predict that "great and terrible day of Jehovah" (Mal. 4-5), before which Elijah shall come, the day of the great trial which is to try all them that dwell upon the earth, and the time of the kingdom which will follow.

Study the Book of the Revelation of St. John if you wish to find an account of the process by which this will be accomplished. Search the latter chapters of the book of the prophet Isaiah. Notice that the avenging

is assigned to a "day," whereas Jehovah's favor is a "year" (Isa. 61-2); that the avenging Redeemer, not the meek and lowly Jesus, who was crucified through weakness (II. Cor. 13:4), but rather Christ, the King of might, suddenly appears, coming in from Edom, where He has trodden down Israel's enemies in the wine-press of divine wrath, "with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength" (Isa. 63:1); mark the birth of a Man-Child and the birth of a nation, that is, of the Church Triumphant and the kingdom of Christ; observe that the travail of the Church Militant comes *after* the birth, and that the pain is of short duration (Isa. 66:7-14), agreeing with St. John's vision wherein he saw Christ come for the Church before the great trial, and he saw a place of refuge prepared for the Woman.

Read diligently the prophecies of Zechariah, foretelling the return of Israel to be a blessing, as they had been a curse, among the nations, and especially the second part,

where we are told of Jerusalem's king suddenly appearing, securing peace to the nations, and attaining to world-wide dominion, and of the final siege of Jerusalem by *all* nations, out of which, by the interposition of the Pierced One, Jerusalem, after extreme peril and suffering, shall be triumphantly delivered. "*So* Jehovah will become King over all the earth" (Zach. 14:9). Then the "wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith Jehovah" (Isa. 65:25).

I am well aware that this doctrine has been fiercely attacked, as, indeed, have been most all Christian truths, and as St. Peter said it would be when he wrote in his second epistle, "in the last days mockers shall come . . . saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." I know that many do not believe it, and that more do not understand it, supposing that

we have no hope in this world. But when the Apostle said, "if we have hope only in this world," that obscure word "only" was full of significance. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," but His kingdom is to be *over* this world when He takes up His power long ago given Him.

And is not this Catholic doctrine? Does not the Church pray for the *accomplishing of the number of the elect,* and the hastening of His kingdom? Is not the Prayer Book full of it from beginning to end? Do we not still pray according to the command of Jesus, "Thy kingdom come"? In all ages the Church has taught the fact of the coming again of Christ in His glorious majesty, who as "a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days *Judah* shall be saved, and *Israel shall dwell safely* . . . and they shall dwell in their own land" (Jer. 23: 5-8). The days of this king have not yet seen Judah saved, nor Israel dwelling safely, nor in their own land, nor His reign prosperous, because Christ the God has *not* yet taken up

His great power, and come to call the saints to their reward, and to begin the rule which will judge and subdue the nations, and bind with chains them that destroy the earth. The Church has been watchful, so that Christ has not come as a thief; she has repented, so that He has not removed the Church prematurely; the bridegroom has tarried, that oil might be procured; but He will come quickly, as He promised, and take the Church and keep *it* from the trial which is to come upon the whole world.

It is time that we began to realize something of what we may know of our hope and heritage, and the part we are to play in this marvellous work! Time that we began to understand more of the glad tidings, and to publish it abroad! Time that we began to comprehend more of the glorious heritage that awaits us, and to work more earnestly to hasten its consummation; time that we began to think more joyously of the coming of Christ, and to fill our lamps and set them burning more brightly.

And the time of this coming, though we

know not the day nor the hour, we know to be dependent upon our own efforts and efficiency in executing the commission to preach to all the inhabited earth. Is it any wonder that the angels in heaven did not know when would be accomplished this work, given into the hands of such lukewarm and blind messengers as we have been? But our Lord is waiting, waiting, waiting! And, when we have done our part, He will come, as He promised.

Then shall the end come; the end of the Gospel Age, and the beginning of the age of the kingdom; the end of the warfare, and the beginning of the triumph of the Church; the end of our struggles, our weakness and failure, and patience, and the beginning of our glory; the end of our blindness and ignorance, and the beginning of our union with Christ when we shall see Him as He is.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Let him that heareth say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come and take the water of life, and testify. And He of whom he testifieth also testifies these things, and

saith, Yea, I come quickly. Is not this an incentive, a stimulus, an impelling motive? Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:20).